



The Process of Growth:  
Toward a New Awareness in Feminism

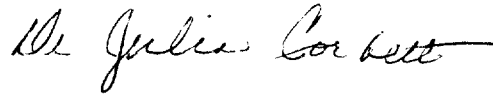
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## Abstract

The issues facing young women today require that they redefine their commitment to feminist goals. However, many young women find the label "feminist" uncomfortable. This discussion will attempt to discover the reasons behind this denial of feminism and, furthermore, redefine feminism as a movement that offers a range of options that allow women to become comfortable with feminism. In doing so, an argument will also be provided that uncovers the philosophical issues that inhibit women in the pursuit of feminist goals. Finally, this discussion will apply the alternative feminist approach described above to the difficult choices that women must face in choosing how to cope with tension between work and family.

This paper is dedicated to my mother who has taught me to rejoice in my womanhood, and to Brendon who has challenged me to retain my autonomy and yet love with all my heart.

*"She's a friend of my mind. She  
gather me, man. The pieces I  
am, she gather them and give  
them back to me in all the right order.  
It's good, you know, when you got a  
woman who is a friend of your  
mind."*

*from Beloved by Toni Morrison*

It has been a struggle for me to call myself a feminist. Young women on college campuses across the nation are balking at such labels. Few of us want to be associated with the images of "man-haters" and "separatists" that often defined the women's movement in the 1970's. It is time for our generation to define feminism in ways with which we feel comfortable. The issues that need to be addressed by young women today are similar to those discussed by first generation feminists, but the means of achieving their goals are changing. This does not imply overturning all of the victories that the women's movement has already accomplished. Much of what women in the 60's and 70's were working for we now take for granted, such as demanding equal pay and equal opportunity in education and career. We cannot stop striving toward the

important goals that were sought by first generation feminists, but my generation of young women must modify, clarify, expand, and claim these goals as our own.

What we as the new generation of young women need to do is to define feminism so more women can feel comfortable embracing the feminist movement. We need to define for ourselves what it means to be women and what it is in today's society that inhibits us from achieving our full potential. We need to address the problems that face all of us who look at our lives and wonder how we can possibly handle a family and a career. We need to create a feminism that allows us to celebrate our differences from our male counterparts, a feminism that lets us love our sexuality. Finally, we need to incorporate men into our plans for the development of our new women's movement.

The journey toward this new awareness in feminism requires that we look at the philosophies that hinder our work. Western thought has introduced a way of analyzing the world through dichotomization that has split the human psyche into unnatural compartments. These schisms need to be identified and healed if women are to be able to regain their power of identity and find practical solutions to the problems they face.

My goal is to provide a solid argument that uncovers the philosophical assumptions that inhibit women in the pursuit of their goals, and furthermore, redefine feminism as a movement that

offers a range of options and actions for women to achieve their potential. In doing so, I will address the issues that I think are the most important for young women today. I will also discuss a new standard of value that is not as self-punishing and self-defeating as today's standard. My hope is to offer a philosophy that is holistic and practical so that we might regain our solidarity as women in a way that is not separatist. We must, furthermore, pass this strength on to our own daughters and sons.

Today's young women have been labeled the "No, but..." generation. As one woman from Auburn University says, "I am feminine, not a feminist. I picture a feminist as someone who is masculine and doesn't shave her legs and is doing everything she can to deny that she is feminine." This Auburn student, when questioned further, admitted to expecting a career as well as marriage and kids, equal pay for equal work, and a husband who would partake in some of the "domestic" work (Wallis, 1989). The issues that this woman sees to be outside feminism and takes for granted are the same issues that women in previous generations wanted for themselves, hence sparking the first phase of the women's movement.

In talking to women who were activists in the early stages of the women's movement, I have found that there was a distinction drawn between "feminism" and the "women's movement" that may help clarify why the young woman from Auburn does not want to be

labeled a feminist but still lives by feminist ideals. My mother, Kathryn Tecza, was very active in the women's movement while I was growing up. I asked her how she defined feminism as distinguished from the women's movement:

I always understood feminism to be an attempt by intellectual women to politicize an embryonic personal women's movement. There was a difference between the "process" of feminism and its "product." The process is philosophical (i.e. consciousness-raising about power and who has it, who does not) and incorporates a more cooperative approach to problem solving. This is different than the "product" emphasis of political rights in the women's movement. Keep in mind that the women's movement incorporated feminism through consciousness-raising and scholarly analysis of women's condition, but the women's movement was primarily successful in achieving a limited "product"-- the rights (political and social) that have been won for women over the last 30 years or more. In my opinion, that's why one does not have to be a feminist to participate in or be a beneficiary of the women's movement because the movement produced a "product" (rights). The process that defines feminism is a fundamental philosophical shift (personal communication, December, 1991).

Interestingly, women involved in the women's movement of the 60's and 70's did not necessarily call themselves feminists. There seems to have been a change in the definition of feminism over the last decade or so. The definition gulf between the view of a feminist as an intellectual academic from the last generation and the bra-burning separatist of this generation needs to be bridged to create an understanding of feminism that is accessible to women of all backgrounds.

Why is it important for women to call themselves feminists? If women can benefit from the product of the women's movement without being feminists, then why is there so much concern with the number of young women who refuse to be called feminists? The answers to these questions lie in the tightly woven bond between feminism and the women's movement. The movement in the 1970's was alive and striving for specific political and social goals. It also incorporated the theories that feminism was discovering. In this way, the women's movement changed the lives of many women in this country.

Cynthia Gong became active in women's movement at the local level in the Chicago suburb of Oak Park. She was involved in many national women's organizations and began the first consciousness-raising group in Oak Park. She describes the affect the women's movement had on her:

The movement was powerful. It provided strong leadership



and role models for women. It was a time of creativity when women were discovering things about themselves and the things that they had in common. As for myself, I have much more awareness of women in society, history, and role. I am a stronger, more confident person because of the role I played for the passage of the ERA. I can look back with satisfaction that I tried to make my country a better place for the disadvantaged. *I was part of the larger whole* (my emphasis) (personal communication, December, 1991).

Women need to be identified with feminism because it allows us to be identified with other women. We need to re-affirm our connection with the common concerns that affect women. Kathryn Tecza says, "the need of women to be recognized for their power in both body and mind is crying for some theoretical/philosophical framework that can be the foundation for women to nurture and sustain themselves through this painful period of growth."

This theory of feminism can provide a method to accomplish this goal by identifying some of the commonalities among women and examining the ways in which these bonds are being severed. When women call themselves feminists it should only be an indicator that they acknowledge the connectedness of all women and are living in a way that they believe fosters these connections. The focus of feminism then changes from a negative focus on what women do not have to a celebration of women's experience and

values (Gong).

The first step in celebrating womenhood is to first define what it is to be a woman. Feminist author Iris Marion Young explains that the definition of woman is different among first and second generation feminists. She labels the first generation's definition, based heavily on Simone DeBeauvoir's theories, "humanist feminism." Modern definitions of women are considered a part of "gynocentric feminism." According to Young, humanist feminism explains women's oppression as "the inhibition and distortion of women's potential by society that allows self-development of men." Gynocentric feminism states women's oppression is the "devaluation and repression of women's experience by a masculinist culture that exalts violence and individualism"(Young, 1990, p. 73).

DeBeauvoir strongly supported the ideal of the universal equality of all humanity. Her goal was to live in a society where sex differences made no difference. She claimed that there is no essential difference between men and women due to some mysterious quality or essence that all women have. Instead, the difference lay in the set of structures and conditions that define the typical situation of being a woman in society (Young, 1990). "She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inescapable as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject. He is the Absolute. She is the

Other" (DeBeauvoir, 1952, p. xix).

Woman as object relegates her to the position of being an object of other people's intentions and manipulations. Women merely react to the actions of others. This creates a tension for women, according to DeBeauvoir. As a person, she is to act as a free subject, both autonomous and creative. However, as a woman she is denied that freedom. Instead, she is a mere body and is treated as a thing instead of a person. DeBeauvoir therefore concludes that the body is a burden which weighs down women's existence by tying them to nature. Women need distance from the body in order to gain subjectivity and autonomy. She creates the impression that a woman's anatomy and physiology in part determines her unfree status (Young, 1990).

The women of the first generation women's movement felt confined by this view. It was in some ways contrary to their experience. They did feel like they were being treated as objects and not as autonomous persons, but were uncomfortable with DeBeauvoir's conclusions. Cindy Gong explains,

Personally, I was raised to feel bad about myself, to look for someone to take care of me, to be a part, and a supporting part, of someone else, to drop everything when children came and not to expect too much of myself. Now, society, not the women's movement, demands I work outside the home. I'm a dinosaur in my own time and sadly to say the women's

movement made me feel worse rather than better. Very late in the movement came a positive recognition of women's traditional point of view. How our unique love, ability to be multi-dimensional, caring for others and flexible, rather than fixed, could actually be of value.

Unfortunately, DeBeauvoir's notion that women should get rid of their identity invested in the body and nature tended instead to accept the male preconceptions concerning what a free, autonomous person should be (Keller, 1989). DeBeauvoir judged women on the values of men and the women's movement tended to do the same. She went back to affirm the assumptions of a long tradition of male created philosophy.

Traditional philosophy has deeply ingrained the assumption that humans are valuable because they are rational beings. Rationality is what separates humans from animals. Western philosophical tradition considers nature to be without purpose or value (Christ, 1989). However, this assumption leads to a disdain for the body and for physical attachments (Rothman, 1990). DeBeauvoir agreed strongly with this theory.

An example of the values placed on the mind versus the body is clearly seen in the works of one of the most influential philosophers in history. Plato, in the Allegory of the Cave, describes a world where the people who live in the cave derive their only source of knowledge from shadows of puppets thrown against the

cave wall by firelight. It is not until one person can climb out of the cave into the blinding sunlight and see things as they really are that true knowledge can be obtained. The allegory equates the physical world and the body with the darkness and shadows of the cave. Only through the transcendent light of reason can things be really known. According to Plato, man's only purpose should be to escape the lies of the cave (the body) to reach the Truth of reason.

However, for a woman, her body is essential to her identity. It allows her to experience the interconnections of life, a life-force, a commitment to life. Although men also find their identity tied to the body, it is a different kind of identification. Men often see the body as a tool with which they can overcome nature. The body is of value for what it can do. There is a drive in most men to conquer the body so it will become stronger, bigger, faster, more agile and therefore more useful as a tool to carry out the duties of the mind. In this way, the body is not significant in its own right.

Women, on the other hand, tend to see the body in relationship with nature, thereby deserving of respect and nurturing. Although women also push their bodies to gain strength and agility, the motivation for doing so is usually to keep the body healthy in order to maintain healthy relationships with the self, nature, and others. Carol Gilligan conducted research on the different ways in which women define themselves and reports, "thus, in all of the women's descriptions, identity is defined in a

context of relationship and judged by a standard of responsibility and care (Trask, 1986, p. 160)."

Unfortunately, because of our identification with the disdained body, women have been relegated to a lesser status than men. Susan Griffin (1978, p. 53), in Women and Nature, says, "The oppression of women began with the separation of spirit and matter. Once you have matter lacking spirit, it's a lowly substance, of its nature requiring domination and control...The split needs to be healed."

The method of healing that split lies in the re-evaluation and acceptance of the traditionally female values of integration, connectedness, and sustenance. Gynocentric feminism makes that step to create a healthy view of connectedness. It works to alter the traditional view of personhood as freedom and autonomy, replacing this view with one that allows for the inseparability of intellect/emotion, rational/sensual, political/spiritual, autonomous/nurturing (Keller, 1989). Compartmentalization of women's lives denies the passionate link between mind and body.

It is this passionate link that Haunani-Kay Trask (1986) defines as the feminist Eros. Eros is the theoretical/philosophical framework that Kathryn Tecza called for as necessary as the foundation for women to nurture and sustain themselves. It is what Cynthia Gong found so lacking in the women's movement. It is what will heal the split caused by traditional Western philosophy. The

most appealing aspect of the theory of Eros is that it allows for the experience of each individual woman to be affirmed and valued.

Eros springs from the desire for existence with meaning, for a consciousness informed by feeling, for experience that integrates what has been dichotomized. It is both love and power (Trask, 1986). It accepts an intimate knowledge of the physical and instinctual and an understanding of what brings joy and meaning. This knowledge empowers each person with a passion for thinking and loving. Eros acknowledges that the erotic potential in women is for more than sexual or reproductive purposes. As Audre Lorde says, "the erotic is the sensual bridge which connects the spiritual and the political" (Trask, 1986). Eros supposes that contradictions are not forever opposed, but accepted and continually transformed, uniting the internal/external and personal/political. As Carl Jung once said in Freud and Psychoanalysis, "things that fall hopelessly apart in theory lie close together without contradiction in the paradoxical soul of the human" (cited in Trask, 1986).

Gynocentric feminism can encompass Eros to create a strong, yet flexible, set of standards. This has been accomplished in some ways by the Native American culture. It is interesting to see how Native Americans apply the theory of Eros in their own culture.

Native Americans value the woman because she is life-giver. In fact, the status of Mother is the highest status a person might hold. The value of motherhood is more than just that of sentimental

respect. Mother signifies competence. She possesses the power to make life--the source of all power. It is not only physical life that a Mother bears, but creative and spiritual life as well. She also sustains and vitalizes all that she has borne.

Women value their role as vitalizers. Through their body, they can bring vital beings into the world. This is a power that is more awesome than any shamanic display. Women hold the power to make, to create, and to transform--not only give birth. From these attributes flows a sacred power possessed by all women through their spiritual connection (Allen, 1990). Everything is linked spiritually and it is that link that is the essence of a woman's power. This power is not to be confused with political or economic power. It is supernatural in its nature. The nature of women is to bring and sustain life, not to dominate life. For this reason, the power of women is not a power of dominance and oppression. It is a balance of the power of sustenance (Allen, 1990).

These applications of Eros in the Native American culture offer a beacon of encouragement to feminists. There is a way to live in a society in which women are valued for possessing a different kind of power and a different set of values. Gilligan calls it a "morality of responsibility" (cited in Trask, 1986, p. 19). She explains it as women emphasizing the web of relations and relationships as primary, similar to the way Native American women are respected for their link to the spiritual and mysterious



connections of life. However, women cannot be expected to carry the entire responsibility of bringing about acceptance of this different set of values. Although women may be more naturally inclined toward this method of relating, men must also work to acknowledge this standard and integrate it into the current male value system.

Eros demands the inseparability of self and world, subject and object (Keller, 1989). This necessarily concludes that if one respects oneself and the self is inseparable from the world, then one respects the world. This belief that is crucial to the Native Americans is becoming increasingly popularized today by a movement called ecofeminism. Karen Warren (1991, p. 64) explains ecofeminism in this way:

Ecological feminism has roots in a variety of different feminist practices and philosophies. This is to be expected. Just as there is not one feminism, there is not one ecofeminism. Despite differences among ecofeminists, what is distinctive of ecofeminism is its commitment to making visible the various ways in which the dominations of women and nonhuman nature are sanctioned and perpetuated under patriarchy, and the commitment to engaging in practices and develop analyses aimed at ending these twin exploitations.

Warren claims that the domination of women and nature is interconnected. Ecofeminists understand the inseparability of self

and world and are promoting consciousness raising about the role women must play in respecting nature. Women's alliance with nature through childbirth has been traditionally acknowledged. Furthermore, if a woman is aware of the interconnectedness of life, then there is also a responsibility to care for all aspects of life. Susan Griffin (1978, p. 88) writes, "In Descartes' Meditations he wrote that he came to see that animals don't have souls when he tried to think of sponges and shellfish having souls. That's why I dedicated Women and Nature to shellfish and sponges. When we take the soul from nature, what we are really doing is fragmenting human wholeness."

Both ecofeminism and the Native American tradition fall under the broader category of gynocentric feminism as they attempt to give value to women's experience and qualities. They seek to create standards that do not use the male as the norm. However, there are some dangers in gynocentric feminism that must be avoided.

In working to promote women's experience, one must be careful not to reduce all women to a "feminine essence." In saying that women are sustainers, nurturers, and able to see the value of interconnectedness, one must not assume that all women have these qualities or that they value these qualities. To look for only one common characteristic or set of characteristics that applies to all women and makes them "feminine" risks losing the importance

of each woman as an individual.

It is important to remember that feminism embraces the plurality of ways in which women express their identity as women. Feminism is not a convenient panacea that will reveal the mysteries of womanhood. Essentialism could also lead to further dichotomization of men and women by "nature." Men are then seen as fundamentally strong, dominating, suppressing while women are fundamentally in touch with nature, relational, caring. This would merely be falling into the ways of thinking that are not wholistic (Young, 1990).

Furthermore, gynocentric feminism may also fall into the position of accepting all of the traditional views of women, which may weaken the claim that women are oppressed. There are definitely some traditional qualities that have been forced on women that are not at all comfortable or fitting for all women, such as submissiveness, docility, or domesticity. One must also realize that women have not only been devalued by society, but also disadvantaged in the workforce, in welfare, and in other visible ways. Work needs to be done to correct these injustices as well as the injustices of devaluation. Finally, gynocentric feminism cannot consciously work to devalue men's traditional activities and experiences. If so, then it has allowed itself to accept the same values of power that it claims are discriminatory (Young, 1990).

One of the main criticisms of the women's movement was that

feminism moved solely into the realm of academia. It was an issue to be debated among academics in women's studies courses, not something that was vital in the everyday lives of women. It turned away from the grassroots concerns of women. The feminism of the second generation cannot be allowed to slip into the same fate. In order to prevent that from occurring, I would like to turn my attention to some practical applications of these theories. Young women such as myself are faced with decisions that seem to place us in a no win situation. How can feminism help to ease some of that frustration? What positive actions can be taken to assure that the feminist ideals will be useful?

Betty Friedan, often called the mother of feminism, whose book, The Feminine Mystique brought to light the issues debated by the woman's movement, has written a second book on this subject. The Second Stage is Friedan's acknowledgement that the movement has to change with the needs of the women who participate in it. She states that the second stage involves coming to terms with the family. In today's economy, women do not have much choice in whether or not they want to work. It is difficult for most families to be economically stable without two incomes. Therefore, we need to create new family structures that can sustain women and change as they change (Friedan, 1981).

The personhood of women was the goal of the first stage of the women's movement, but equality and personhood aren't

complete until motherhood is a fully free choice. The family and feminism cannot be seen to be in conflict. Friedan (1981, p.22) claims, "the movement must change its focus from succeeding in a man's world on a man's terms to achieve balance between this new role (of women in the workforce) and woman's traditional roles as mother and tender of the hearth."

If feminism is going to make an honest attempt to initiate changes in the way women balance their work and their families, then women must acknowledge the power of Eros that is within them. The Native American ideals provide a good model for the conditions needed to achieve the practical usage of Eros. For example, the office of mother needs to be recognized for the honor it deserves. In order to view motherhood as an empowered position, there needs to be a change the way mothers are treated. The view of motherhood should be rid of sentimental and sappy homages and replaced with the respect of mothers for their competence (Allen, 1986). In other words, using the image of June Cleaver with dinner on the table at five o'clock as a standard for motherhood does not promote respect for the woman as an individual, but merely a convenience for the rest of the family.

Competence implies that women are fundamental in shaping the physical, creative, and spiritual aspects of not only the children they bear, but also the other relationships in which they participate. Most women are able to sustain and vitalize the relationships they

create. Barbara Katz Rothman states eloquently (Wallis, 1989):

We have in every pregnant woman the living proof that individuals do not enter this world as autonomous, atomistic, isolated beings, but begin socially, begin connected. And we have in every pregnant woman a walking contradiction of the segmentation of our lives; pregnancy does not permit it. In pregnancy, the private self, the sexual, and the familial self, announces itself wherever the woman goes.

Although, childbirth is probably the strongest and most profound way for a woman to experience motherhood, it is not the only way. She may also be responsible for intellectual and spiritual birth. However, an important way for women to become whole and able to integrate family and work is to accept the role of birther.

In the "man's world," the need to create, sustain, and vitalize relationships is not usually very pronounced. This is not only because of basic biological and psychological differences between men and women, but also because of the value each places on relationships. There needs to be a balance of each value system in order to achieve an integrated system. The fundamental reason why many women feel so alienated by the work world may be because their values have not yet received the recognition they deserve.

In order to create a balance of the importance of pursuit and domination with the equal importance of integration and sustenance, our institutions must allow women to create a bridge

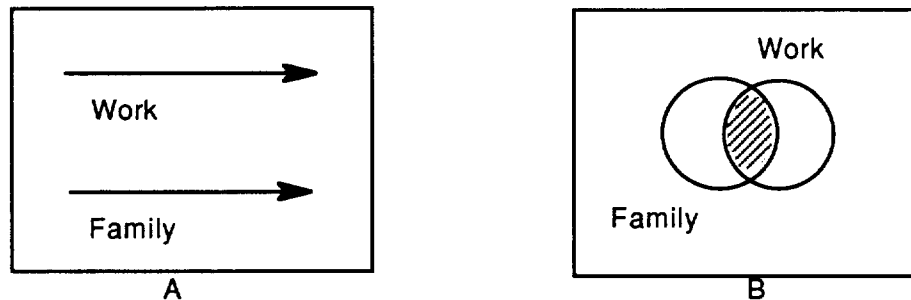
between work and family. Here is the story of a young Wall Street lawyer who describes her own personal evolution (Friedan, 1981, p. 321):

I never had any confidence in myself before I practiced law. I think the woman's movement not only gave me those opportunities--it helped me respect women a lot more--and respect myself as a woman. I like the self-confidence, the ability as a problem-solver and the courage to speak out that I got in law. I've lost a vague, tentative, ethereal quality that I used to have. But my style in work is not like a man's. I'm very determined but I'm not aggressive. I'm not put off by a blowhard. I let them rant and rave, then quietly handle their points, one by one. It works every time. The men in my firm go for the jugular, take every punch, always on the aggressive. I was put off by that, I wasn't sure I could be aggressive. It seemed to be the only way, at first, but it's not just me. When I began to handle my own cases, I began to find my own style. I think there is a difference between men and women. I don't try to rant and rave in court like the men.

A few years ago, when I was pregnant, I felt like having a baby would interfere with my career. I had an abortion. Today, I go into court and see a lot of women in their thirties with their bellies way out to here. And I think they look just as beautiful, handling their cases with confidence and professional skill

and confident enough to have the baby too.

There needs to be a change in the way work and family are viewed. If family and work are perceived to be two parallel lines, then finding a point of intersection becomes a difficult, if not an impossible task (Drawing A). However, if family and work are seen as two overlapping circles, then there is inherently common area (Drawing B).



The overlapping area in drawing B allows for the integration family and work. It shows that there is a way to have both without neglecting one. There are also places where family and work are distinct. These places are just as important as the overlap. They allow time to concentrate on the pursuits and rewards of each individually. Understandably, the way in which this integration of work and family is achieved will be different for each woman, but each method must be supported by feminism.

There is, however, a danger that threatens women who are able integrate family and work. This is the threat of becoming "Superwoman." Superwoman is she who attempts to be the perfect



spouse, the perfect mother, and the perfect employee or executive. Unfortunately, this trap is set by women themselves who are still trying to prove that they can do it all. They have convinced themselves that the only way to justify their actions is to do everything like they have nothing else to which they devote time and energy. This is causing undo stress on many women and hindering the enjoyment of everything that is done. The bottom line is that women do not have to be perfect. Men have never pretended to be able to deal with all the things that confront them alone. They readily admit that they need their spouses for support. Now women must learn from these men and allow themselves to be imperfect and rely on their significant others for help.

Conversely, one cannot automatically assume that woman who has found her balance between work and family, as well as self and others, is playing Superwoman, or worse yet, playing a martyr. For example, I have a very good woman friend who has been told time and time again that she lets people walk all over her. She has been called a pushover and an overachiever, always putting other people's needs before her own. Unfortunately, there are times when she buys into this theory and feels like a victim.

Recently, I asked her if she really felt like she was letting others take advantage of her. She told me that most of the time she is comfortable enough with her own self that she is able to unselfishly attend to the needs of others. It is only when she is told

that this is not the proper way of handling relationships that she doubts her methods.

My friend has a sense of her own personhood. She has worked hard to obtain and maintain it. In this respect, she is the perfect example of what a modern feminist should be. She has integrated her autonomy into her interpersonal relationships. She says there are times when she needs to take care of her self, and when these times come, then her needs do come first. But when she is feeling confident in her personhood, then she has the freedom to sustain her relationships. Her doubt stems from the forces of a male value system working against her. The male value system says sustaining a relationship is just a way of avoiding the pursuit of new goals.

Early feminism downplayed the differences between men's and women's value systems. Women were forced to try to succeed in a "man's world." Now women want to glorify those differences in gender values. We are seeking respect for the uniqueness of women, both from ourselves and our partners.

Turning again to the Native American culture as a model, we find something similar to what I'm describing. Behavior and expectations of men and women fell along gender lines. However, gender was understood as psychological or psychospiritual, not physiological. Girls were taught to be strong and balanced. It was unheard of for girls to be taught to be weaklings, waiting for the

physical strength of men. Women were not believed to lack physical strength; on the contrary, they bore the ultimate test of strength in childbirth. Women were not seen, nor did they see themselves, as mindless, helpless, simple or oppressed (Allen, 1986).

Men and women were two distinct communities within the tribe, separated due to the difference in their powers. Each had its own importance and spiritual significance. It is important to note that ritual observances were not imposed on woman by men, nor vice versa. Women did not view themselves as victims of male-domination, for they too possessed powers, some of which were greater than those of men. While the communities were separated, each was respected for its contribution. For instance, dying in battle and dying in childbirth were of the same rank of spiritual accomplishment (Allen, 1986).

Native Americans were able to respect and celebrate gender differences. They were also able to integrate the different systems into one tribe. They understood that each gender has its own uniqueness that is necessary for the survival of the community. Today's society can learn from the practices of the Native Americans. In doing so, women need to understand the importance of working with men to achieve feminist goals. Women do not want to be victims of discrimination, nor should they want to discriminate against others. It would be contrary to the fundamental values of connectedness, integration, and sustenance to

do so.

Women are now coming to recognize the need to acknowledge the balance that men's value systems can provide for the women's movement instead of viewing them as the enemy. It's time to go beyond the "sexual politics" that cast men as the evil other. Now is the time to keep from becoming locked into obsolete power games and irrelevant sexual battles that can never be won, or that will be lost by winning. The "battle of the sexes" has become a tired cliché. The armaments of that battle must be put away so that men and women can work together for the betterment of both sexes (Friedan, 1981).

Friedan (1981, p. 51) writes, "There is a complex human reality of the sexual, social, psychological, economic, and biological relationship between woman and man." There may be some strong resistance to this statement from some women. It may be interpreted to mean that women are dependent on men by their fundamental nature. I would argue that Friedan is not implying that the relationship between women and men is one of dominance. She is not implying that the only way for a woman to be successful is to manipulate her relationships with men. Her point is that there is a relationship that is necessary between woman and man. The task is to define the context in which that relationship operates. Hopefully, the new definition of feminism will be able to accomplish that.

Today's woman's movement has grown into a movement to re-

evaluate and alter the way present institutions recognize and respond to the needs of women in all the areas of their lives. The final goal of the new generation of feminists is to ensure that all women can express their needs and concerns in their own way and have that method be accepted as valid. Ultimately, I hope there can be achieved an integrated community where every person is able to develop a sense of personhood and an identity that suits their values.

Personally, my own journey has just begun. Throughout the course of writing this paper I have publically identified myself as a feminist and must bear the responsibilities of that label. Fortunately, I am now able to more clearly define what I believe those responsibilities are and adjust my behavior accordingly. I have found, through my research and my personal experience in writing about feminism, that the ideals of the women's movement through the philosophy of feminism can be achieved. I have lived everything that I have written. In that sense I have learned the fundamental claim of feminism. The political is personal.

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